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of restlessness and unhappiness. Happiness is, after all, but the adjustment of the individual needs to the eternal laws—may we not all have it *within* ourselves?

To all strong natures must come criticism of our conduct, our methods of work, our life. To meet and overcome these one by one, in the true spirit, will only develop and build character, and, after all, no matter what our profession, this is the great aim we are all striving for—a life that has helped some other bear the heat and burden of the day. It is ours to be “great or little by our own wills.”

“ If through long,  
Prosaic years we do not tire,  
Can in small things be tried and true—  
This is to live as heroes do.”

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## ANCON HOSPITAL, PANAMA

BY THE NURSING STAFF

IN 1898 there was a feeling of great indignation among women in general, and nurses in particular, because the United States Government was tardy in recognizing the worth of the woman nurse at the front. That it has learned her value has been well illustrated by the fact that in the original scheme of organization framed by the late Isthmian Canal Commission a chief nurse and two assistants were appointed, assigned to duty, and sent down to Panama at the same time as the Chief Engineer, Mr. Wallace, and Chief Sanitary Officer, Colonel W. C. Gorgas.

It now remains with the nurses of America to prove whether, having gained this recognition, they are sufficiently patriotic, when their services are needed, to run the few risks and put up with the slight inconveniences inseparable from pioneer work in a foreign country.

It is a well-known fact that England's best nurses are to be found in her army and government service, as only those of refinement and capabilities above the average are admitted to what is by them considered the most honorable posts in their profession.

There have been so many erroneous and exaggerated statements made regarding the conditions in the hospitals of Panama and the status of the nurses employed there that we, the nurses of Ancon, feel it incumbent upon us to refute these charges, not only because we know that they are keeping nurses of good standing from joining us, but also

because we feel that the unjust insinuations brought against the hospitals and the provisions made therein for the nurses reflect discreditably on those who have expended much labor and thought in the endeavor to make our position here comfortable and our lives enjoyable.

The hospital is not, of course, quite so thoroughly equipped as some of the larger ones in the United States, but many of us who have seen numerous hospitals both at home and abroad agree in stating that Ancon is in some respects not inferior even to the American ones, and that its site is unequalled. At times when we are rushed we are often momentarily provoked at missing various little accessories that make the work easier in the hospitals at home, but, as Mr. "Commissioner" aptly said, "It is a long way from Panama to Broadway," and who could expect, or even wish, to have everything just the same as at home? Those of us who come here with the intention of making the best of things feel that we are gaining a valuable experience in managing and improvising, and, as a rule, think that there is just enough roughing it to add a certain zest to the work.

The statement made recently in one of the New York papers, "That the home conditions provided for the nurses were deteriorating rather than improving is utterly false; the conditions have from the first been steadily improving, and now a new building which will provide all that could be asked for in the way of comfort, and more than could be imagined in the beauty of situation, is well under way. As for the wild tales of the risk nurses run from malaria, yellow fever, etc., statistics prove the contrary. There has been but one case of serious illness among the nurses since they first came here, now more than a year ago. The few who seemed predisposed to attacks of malaria and with whom the climate did not agree were, upon their application for discharge, immediately allowed to return home.

Another statement that has aroused our indignation is that "The only nurses who come here were those who were tired of private duty and desired a change, but that no nurse who could get work elsewhere would return after her vacation." There are among us many who left good hospital positions in the United States because the memory of previous work in the tropics, with its free, out-door life, and the subtle fascination of the lands of palms and glorious moonlights, were too strong to allow us to remain content in a country less favored in these respects. Many did come, it is true, for the former reason, and of those *all* who did efficient work have in the main enjoyed the change, even though four or five have elected not to stay longer than the time required to accomplish the satisfactory term of service. The majority of these, however, have left with the option of returning at any time within a year.

As for the climate, it may be very bad in the interior of the Isthmus, but in Ancon—well! the nurses who have returned from their vacations in the United States and in Canada declare that they are glad to get back to a land where it is not always either too hot or too cold, for though it is hot here in the middle of the day, the mornings and evenings are delightful.

The complaint of "the dearth of mental recreation" is also exaggerated, for as the P. R. R. SS. Co. carries parcels free of charge for the I. C. C. employés, it costs no more to purchase books while here than at home. "No riding or driving" was another report; well, the horses are certainly inferior to those to be had in New York, but their hire costs just one-fifth the amount. "No place to ride;" there are several rides of incomparable beauty, as anyone would agree who had ridden, on a moonlight night, along the hard, white sand that forms the beach of Panama Bay. Frank Carpenter in his article on "The Hospitals of Panama," published in the Boston *Sunday Globe*, April 16, has given a very true description of the beauties of Ancon—beauties which even those who have been here a year still enjoy, finding in them sufficient compensation (even were there no others) for the few things that we may miss during our year—or, rather, ten months—in Panama. Other compensations are eight hours' duty, a week's rest at Taboga, a beautiful island in the Pacific Ocean, at the completion of four months' service, six weeks' vacation at the end of eight months, with many interesting places in which to spend them if one does not wish to go home, and, lastly, as the chief nurse refuses to have women here who are not likely to maintain the dignity of their profession, there is perfect liberty to come and go, when off duty, untrammelled by rules and regulations.

This sketch is based on the experience of the past year. The future may hold other and more serious experiences for us, but whatever they may be, we look forward with interest and hope to be able to perform our duty, in connection with this stupendous work of the twentieth century, with faithfulness to, and confidence in, the powers that be.

